

HEALTH CARE PROPOSALS: WHAT GRADE DO YOU GIVE THEM?

Questions and Comments

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Points (give 0 to 10)

1. Is it a **universal** plan which includes each and every person in the State? 0 10
2. Is it a universal plan which emphasizes **primary care and prevention**? 0 10
3. Is it a universal plan which is **comprehensive in its benefits** and mandates, **identical** for all individuals without preexisting conditions, provisos, opt-ins, opt-outs, discriminating co-pays? Does it recognize health **disparities** and actively remedy inequities in health services and outcomes? 0 10
4. As coverage becomes universal, does it anticipate needs for a **well trained diverse health workforce** for adequate service **capacity** and expertise in all areas within the State, with real **access** for all and compensating in shortage areas? Are all providers given incentives or required to participate in care without discrimination based on status or payment source? 0 10
5. Is there equitable and sustainable system financing such that health is encoded as a **human right**, and that the burden of sickness and payment is distributed throughout society in **a just and progressive** manner? Are there savings of simplicity and efficiency to eliminate profit and bureaucratic waste with redistribution of savings into community services? 0 10
6. Is there established a strong **local and statewide public health structure** for universal **quality** standards to anticipate general and special conditions for disease prevention and health promotion, diminishing need for political, court, and legislative wrangling in special cases? 0 10
7. Does it recognize there is more needed for good health than just medical services – **social determinants of health** include **housing, nutrition, and education**? 0 10
8. Are **oral (dental) and behavioral health services** granted full and adequately-compensated status along with medical services? 0 10
9. Are **communities funded and empowered** to govern and adjust health services for their populations? 0 10
10. Are **health care workers** at all levels adequately compensated and empowered to evaluate and adjust their working conditions? 0 10

Total points (out of 100) (A = 100, B = 90, C = 80, D = 70, F = <60)

Answers: what can be done to get a perfect grade?

1. Legislation entitles all individuals in State, regardless of income, employment, immigration status.
2. Legislation adjusts program spending and fees through state health authority, public health department, and regulations to emphasize primary and preventive care, including local family and community health centers.
3. State regulations, through 'insurance' or health department authorize one uniform sufficient benefit package and set of quality care and service standards for all.
4. Legislature funds training and guideline programs for balanced health workforce; incentives for practice in shortage areas; requirement for servicing population without exclusive panels or discrimination in patient lists as condition of state licensure and practice.
5. Legislature funds health services capturing current federal, state, employer, and employee payments and out-of-pocket costs, adopts progressive tax structure or surcharge, and employs Medicare-like single-payer mechanism with fair provider compensation and quality mechanisms.
6. Legislature strengthens local and state health departments, evidence-based guidelines, and modern electronic records for quality and continuity of care and public health data collection and action.
7. Legislature eliminates homelessness, funds neighborhood improvement and exercise opportunities, ensures sound nutritional adequacy and advice.
8. Current departments of state government are authorized to study and remedy deficiencies in oral and behavioral health funding and distribution.
9. State legislature establishes and funds district or community-based health boards to involve and empower local consumers and health workers.
10. The legislature guarantees that the health workforce, including all levels of training, skill, and organization, is recognized with fair compensation and benefits, with its experience included with consumers in planning and delivering local services and maintaining standards of access and quality.